

## § 20.901

### § 20.901 Rule 901. Medical opinions and opinions of the General Counsel.

(a) *Opinion from the Veterans Health Administration.* The Board may obtain a medical opinion from an appropriate health care professional in the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs on medical questions involved in the consideration of an appeal when, in its judgment, such medical expertise is needed for equitable disposition of an appeal.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5103A(d), 7109)

(b) *Armed Forces Institute of Pathology opinions.* The Board may refer pathologic material to the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology and request an opinion based on that material.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7109(a))

(c) *Opinion of the General Counsel.* The Board may obtain an opinion from the General Counsel of the Department of Veterans Affairs on legal questions involved in the consideration of an appeal.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7104(c))

(d) *Independent medical expert opinions.* When, in the judgment of the Board, additional medical opinion is warranted by the medical complexity or controversy involved in an appeal, the Board may obtain an advisory medical opinion from one or more medical experts who are not employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Opinions will be secured, as requested by the Chairman of the Board, from recognized medical schools, universities, clinics, or medical institutions with which arrangements for such opinions have been made by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. An appropriate official of the institution will select the individual expert, or experts, to give an opinion.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7109)

(e) For purposes of this section, the term “the Board” includes the Chairman, the Vice Chairman, any Deputy

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Vice Chairman, and any Member of the Board before whom a case is pending.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5107(a), 7104(c), 7109)

[57 FR 4109, Feb. 3, 1992, as amended at 61 FR 20453, May 7, 1996; 66 FR 38159, July 23, 2001; 69 FR 19937, Apr. 15, 2004]

### § 20.902 Rule 902. Filing of requests for the procurement of opinions.

The appellant or representative may request that the Board obtain an opinion under Rule 901 (§ 20.901 of this part). The request must be in writing. It will be granted upon a showing of good cause, such as the identification of a complex or controversial medical or legal issue involved in the appeal which warrants such an opinion.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5107(a), 7102(c), 7104(c), 7109)

### § 20.903 Rule 903. Notification of evidence secured and law to be considered by the Board and opportunity for response.

(a) *If the Board obtains a legal or medical opinion.* If the Board requests an opinion pursuant to Rule 901 (§ 20.901 of this part), the Board will notify the appellant and his or her representative, if any. When the Board receives the opinion, it will furnish a copy of the opinion to the appellant’s representative or, subject to the limitations provided in 38 U.S.C. 5701(b)(1), to the appellant if there is no representative. A period of 60 days from the date the Board furnishes a copy of the opinion will be allowed for response, which may include the submission of relevant evidence or argument. The date the Board furnishes a copy will be presumed to be the same as the date of the letter or memorandum that accompanies the copy of the opinion for purposes of determining whether a response was timely filed.

(b) *If the Board obtains other evidence.* If, pursuant to § 19.9(a) or § 19.37(b) of this chapter, the Board obtains pertinent evidence that was not submitted by the appellant or the appellant’s representative, the Board will notify the appellant and his or her representative, if any, of the evidence obtained by furnishing a copy of such evidence. A period of 60 days from the date the Board furnishes the notice will be allowed for